

**Statement for the Record**  
**The Honorable John R. Moolenaar**  
**Member of Congress**  
**Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
**Subcommittee on Interior, Energy, and Environment**  
**March 6, 2018**

Chairman Farenthold, Ranking Member Plaskett, and members of the subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit my statement as you examine how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can improve communication and interaction with local communities.

I would like to highlight two important projects where there have been significant issues in communication between the Corps and local communities: the Soo Locks Replacement and Modernization project and the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project.

American iron ore powers our nation's economy.

And nearly all of that ore passes through the Soo Locks in Sault Ste Marie, Michigan.

The Locks are operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, which has done an outstanding job maintaining the locks, but has not made the construction of a new lock a top priority.

A 2015 report from the Department of Homeland Security clearly lays out what would happen if the Locks were to fail without a new, backup lock in place to handle the lake carriers that deliver ore from the Upper Midwest to manufacturers further south.

The national unemployment rate would rise to over 11 percent, which would be even higher than it was during the last national recession.

States with steel mills and auto suppliers would be badly hurt, and outside of the Midwest, there would be large job losses. In fact, even California and Texas would lose more than 500,000 jobs.

Unfortunately, the cost of a new lock has significantly increased in the more than 30 years since it was first proposed.

The Corps has not taken action because it uses an outdated formula that fails to reflect the actual value of iron ore in our economy.

Iron ore is more than its commodity price.

It is used to build automobiles, refrigerators and other products Americans use everyday.

Iron ore has added value, but the Army Corps' formula for deciding which projects are vital to national security ignores these realities and leaves the country vulnerable to a threat of its own negligence.

The Army Corps needs stop delaying its report and join its colleagues at Homeland Security and rightfully identify the Soo Locks as the Achilles heel of the American economy. It should immediately take action to get this project moving and protect the American people from a catastrophe.

While the Locks are a problem on the northern end of the Lakes, there is also the troubling problem of Asian carp getting close to Lake Michigan through the waterways around Chicago.

The Army Corps just completed one study at Brandon Road and now it is doing another.

This is unnecessary.

The problem is clear.

Asian carp have been found less than 10 miles from Lake Michigan.

This is past the electronic barrier that has been set up to keep invasive species out.

We no longer need studies. We need action.

The Army Corps is putting at risk billions of dollars in tourism, fishing, boating, and risking environmental damage from the introduction of another invasive species.

It is time for the Army Corps to act and stop doing more studies of the same old solutions.

With thousands of public comments in hand, it has more than enough information to move forward on building a barrier that will keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes and it should begin work immediately.

Thank you.